04
THE HERCULOIDS
DYNAMITE
RATED TEEN
SNIEGOSKI
ROUSSEAU

SOMEWHERE OUT IN SPACE LIVE THE HERCULOIDS: ZOK, THE LASER-RAY DRAGON, IGOO THE GIANT ROCK APE, TUNDRO THE TREMENDOUS, GLOOP AND GLEEP THE FORMLESS, FEARLESS WONDERS!

WITH ZANDOR THEIR LEADER, AND HIS WIFE TARA AND SON DORNO, THEY TEAM UP TO PROTECT THEIR PLANET FROM SINISTER INVADERS!

ALL STRONG, ALL BRAVE, ALL HEROES! THEY'RE...

THE HERCULOIDS

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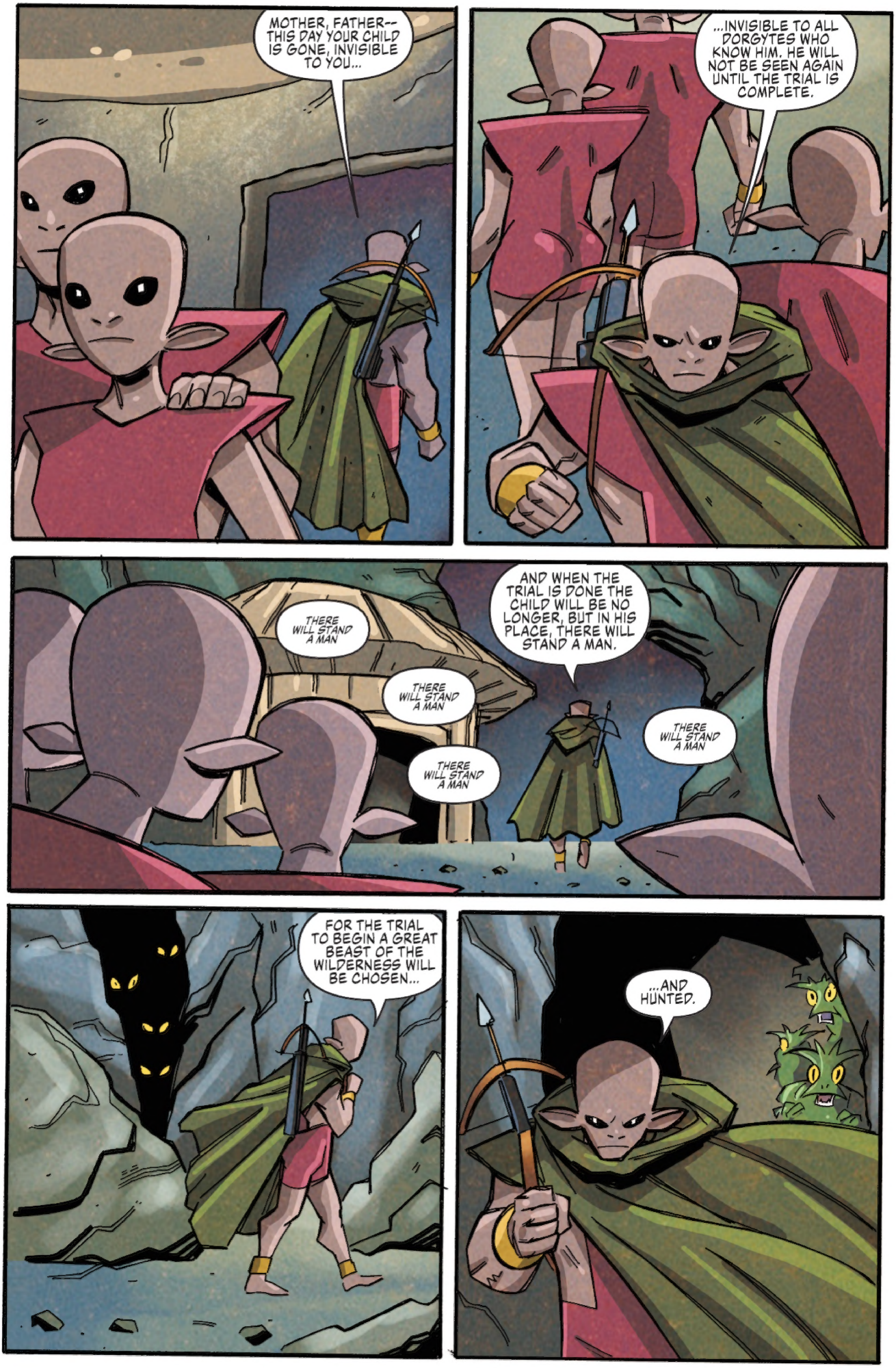
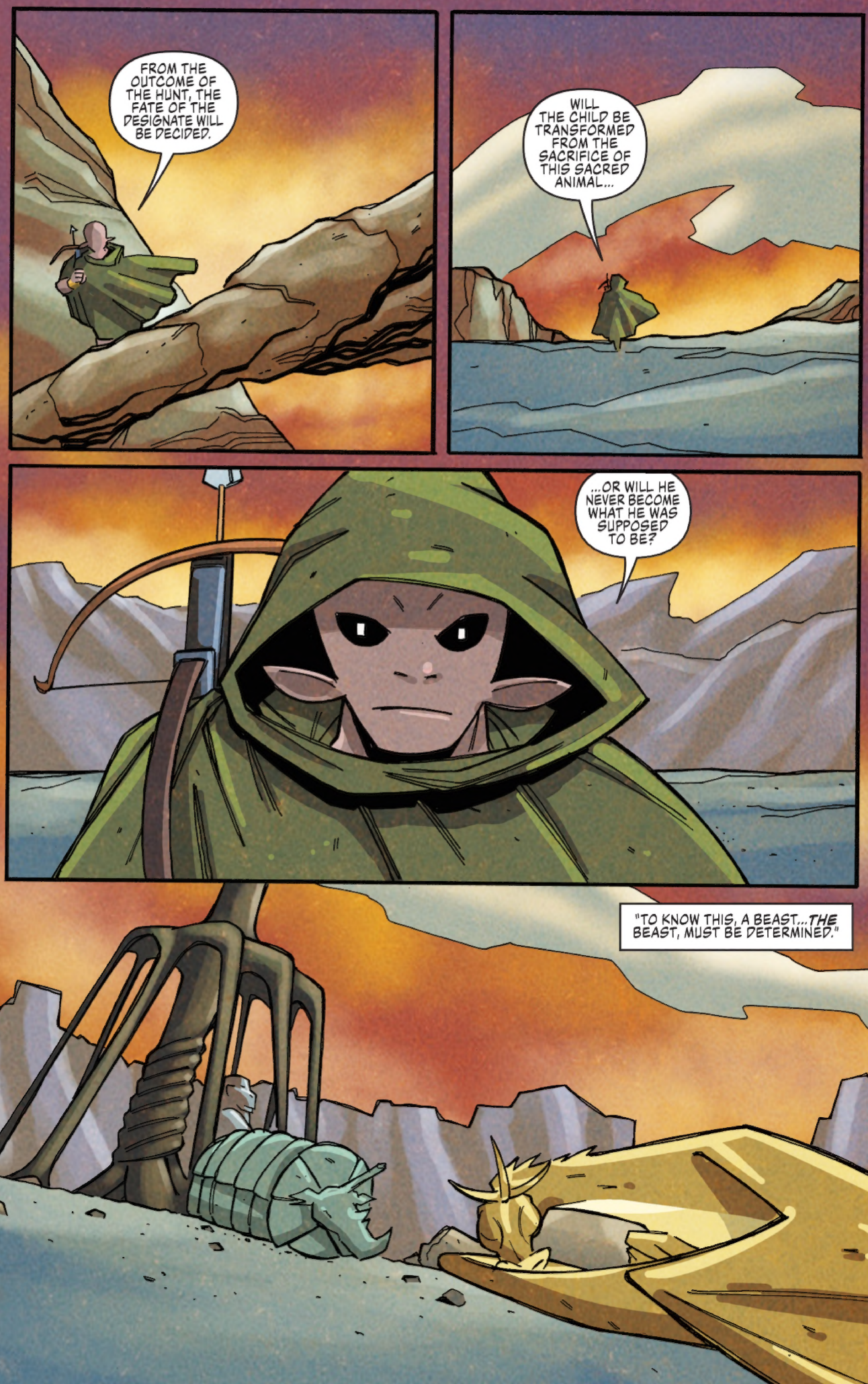
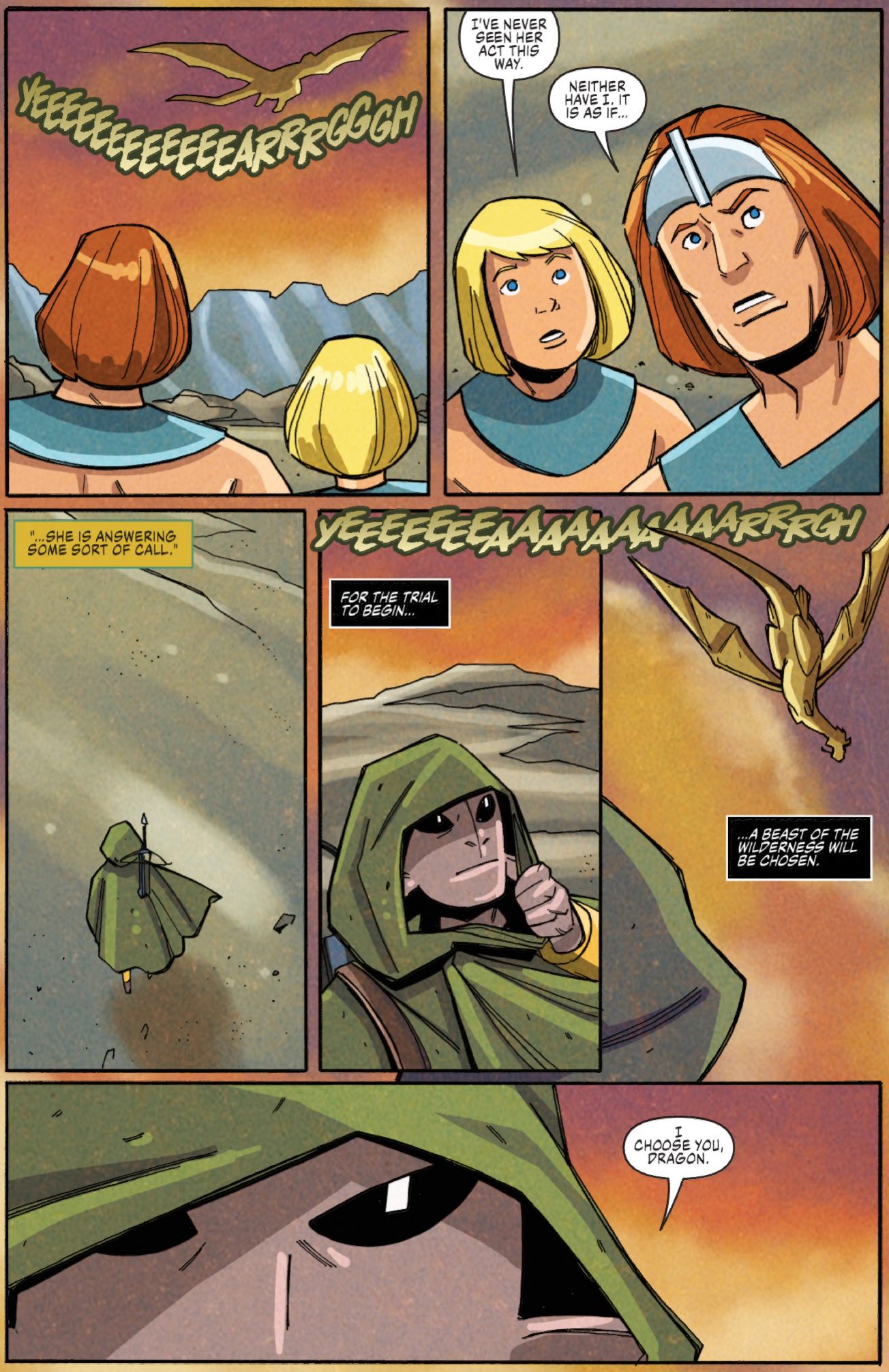
AMZOT.
A DAY IS DAWNING UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
A DAY OF CHANGE.
IT COMES IN SILENCE...
...AND THINGS WILL NEVER AGAIN BE AS THEY WERE.
THE YOUNG DORGYTE WENT TO HIS BED A CHILD BUT AWOKE ON THE VERGE OF TRANSFORMATION.

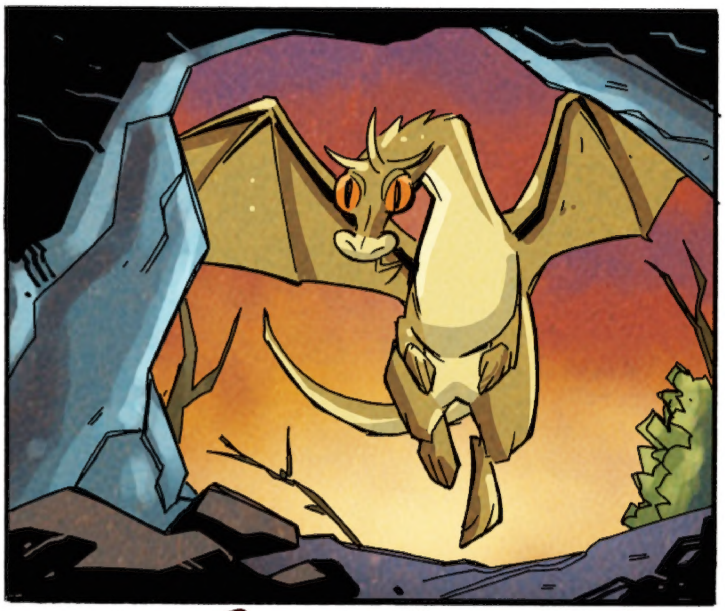

MOTHER, FATHER-- THIS DAY YOUR CHILD IS GONE, INVISIBLE TO YOU...
...INVISIBLE TO ALL DORGYTES WHO KNOW HIM. HE WILL NOT BE SEEN AGAIN UNTIL THE TRIAL IS COMPLETE.
AND WHEN THE TRIAL IS DONE THE CHILD WILL BE NO LONGER, BUT IN HIS PLACE, THERE WILL STAND A MAN.
THERE WILL STAND A MAN
THERE WILL STAND A MAN
THERE WILL STAND A MAN
THERE WILL STAND A MAN
FOR THE TRIAL TO BEGIN A GREAT BEAST OF THE WILDERNESS WILL BE CHOSEN...
...AND HUNTED.


FROM THE OUTCOME OF THE HUNT, THE FATE OF THE DESIGNATE WILL BE DECIDED.
WILL THE CHILD BE TRANSFORMED FROM THE SACRIFICE OF THIS SACRED ANIMAL...
...OR WILL HE NEVER BECOME WHAT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE?
"TO KNOW THIS, A BEAST...*THE* BEAST, MUST BE DETERMINED."

A DAY IS DAWNING, UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
A DAY OF CHANGE.
IT COMES IN SILENCE--A FEELING THAT FORETELLS THINGS WILL NEVER AGAIN BE AS THEY WERE.
ZOK AND I WILL HAVE A QUICK LOOK FROM THE AIR AT WHERE THE RAIDERS' MINING SHIP CAME DOWN TO SEE IF ANYTHING LOOKS OUT OF THE ORDINARY.
WHEN WILL YOU RETURN, ZANDOR?
I SHOULDN'T BE GONE LONG, DORNO.

RREEEEAAR RGGGGH
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HER?
I HAVE NO IDEA.
A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
WHAT IS IT, GIRL? WHAT'S WRONG?
A DAY OF CHANGE.
THINGS WILL NEVER AGAIN BE AS THEY WERE.


YEEEEEEEEEEEEEARRRGGGH
I'VE NEVER SEEN HER ACT THIS WAY.
NEITHER HAVE I. IT IS AS IF...
"...SHE IS ANSWERING SOME SORT OF CALL."
YEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAAARRRGH
FOR THE TRIAL TO BEGIN...
...A BEAST OF THE WILDERNESS WILL BE CHOSEN.
I CHOOSE YOU, DRAGON.

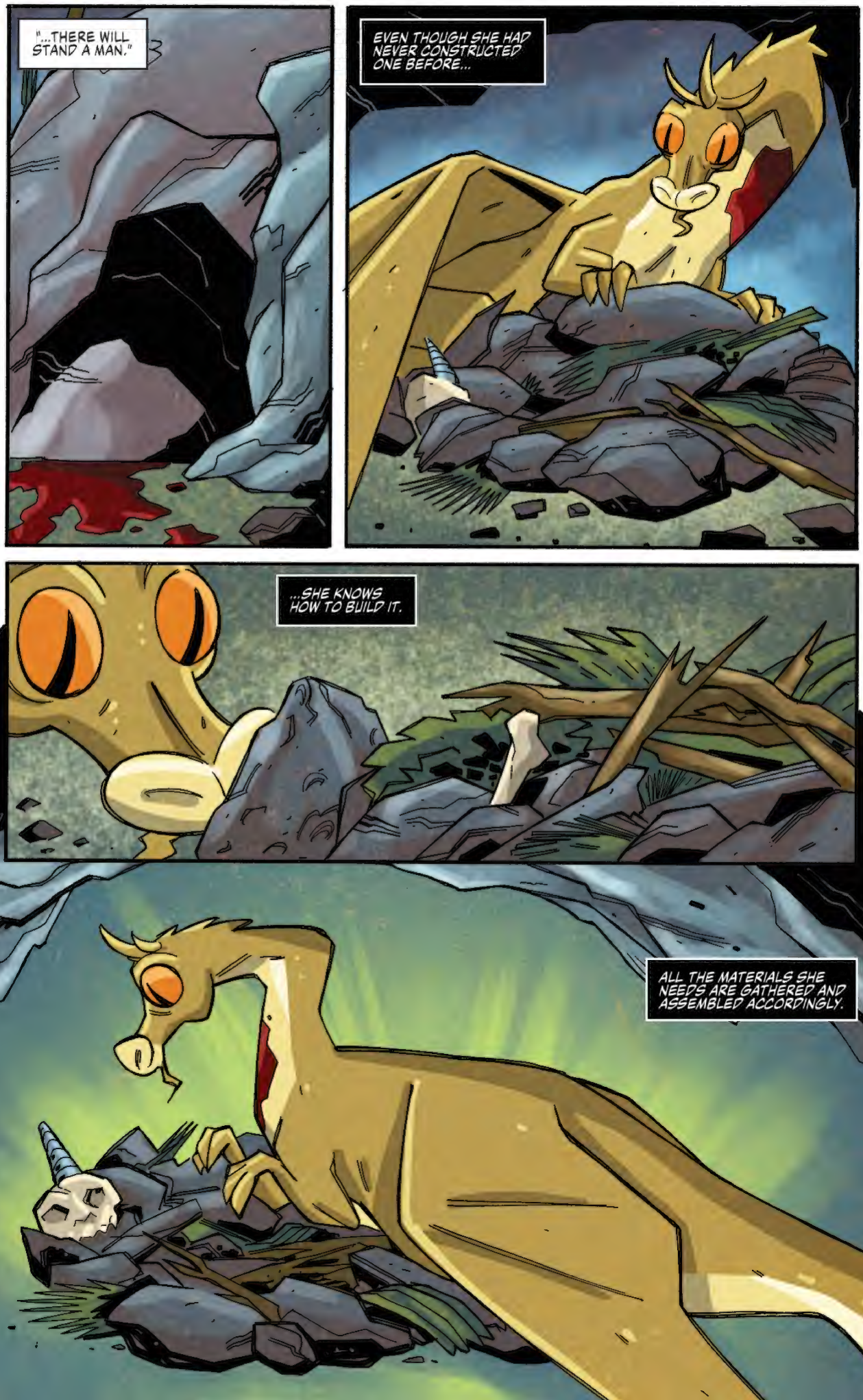


ROOOOOOOOOOOAARR

RAAAAAAAAAARRGGH
YEEEEEEARRRRRH!

YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEERRRR
ROOOAAARRRRRRRR
AAWARRRRRRIIEEE
KRRNCH
CHOMPH
PZZZZZZZZZZZMMMPH
ROOOAARRRRIIEEEE
YEEEEEEEEEEARRRRGGH
CHOMM-
KRRCH

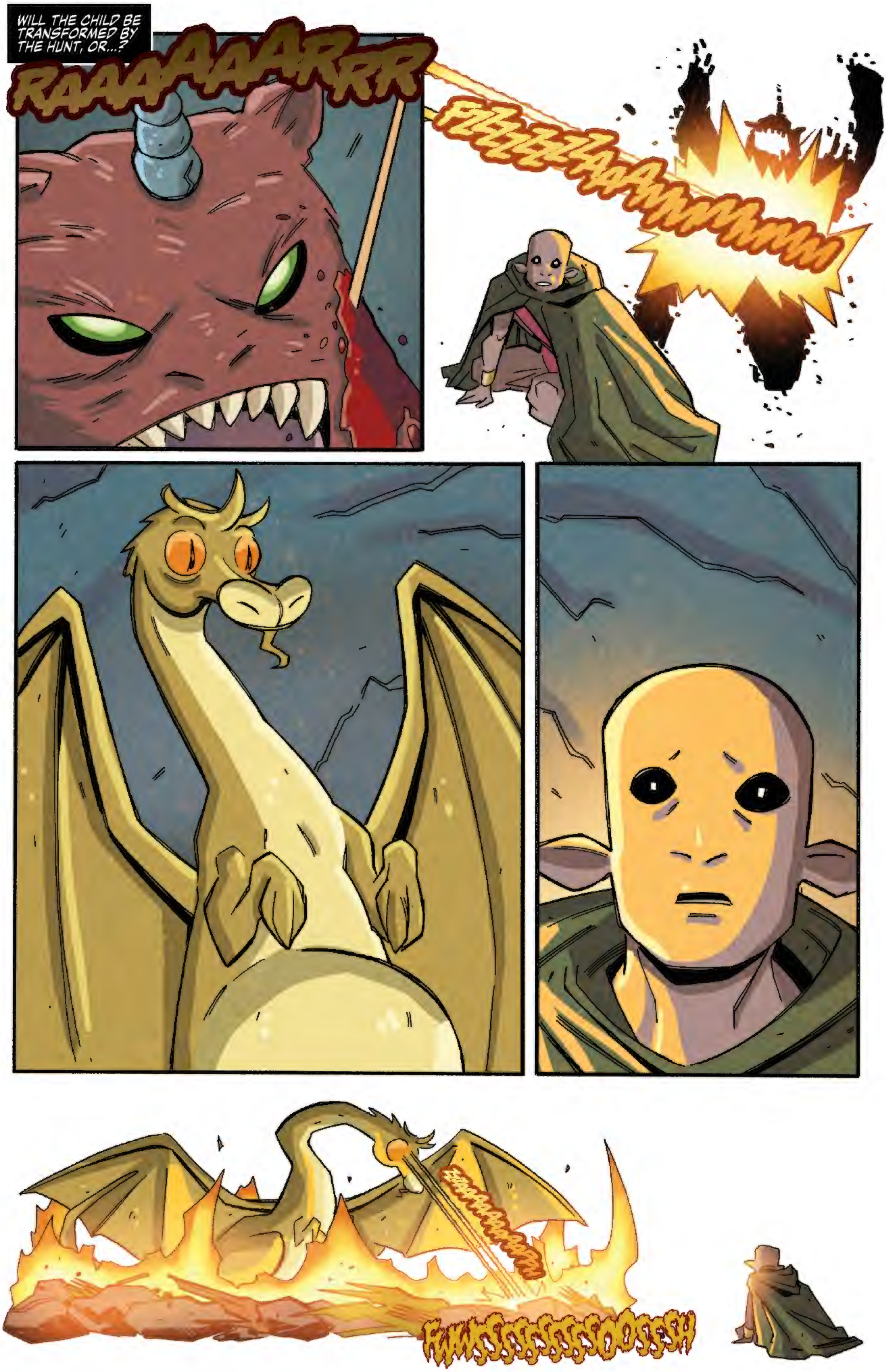
AND WHEN THE TRIAL IS DONE...

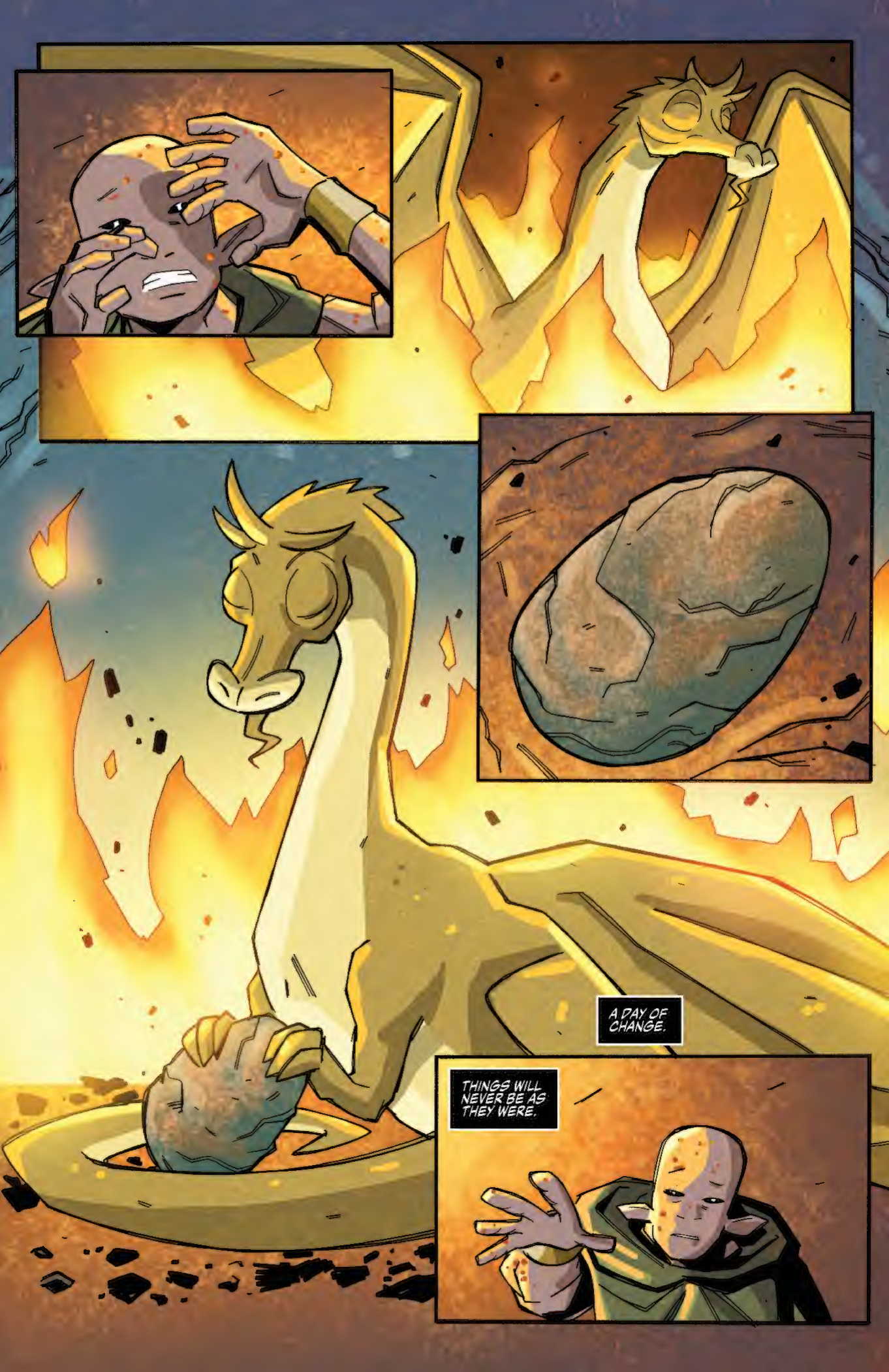

"...THERE WILL STAND A MAN."
EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD NEVER CONSTRUCTED ONE BEFORE...
...SHE KNOWS HOW TO BUILD IT.
ALL THE MATERIALS SHE NEEDS ARE GATHERED AND ASSEMBLED ACCORDINGLY.

THE NEST IS READY.
TIME IS GROWING NEAR.
IT WILL BE SOON.

A GREAT BEAST OF THE WILDERNESS HAS BEEN CHOSEN...
IT IS TIME.
...AND HUNTED.
WHEN THE TRIAL IS COMPLETE, AND THE HUNT IS DONE--

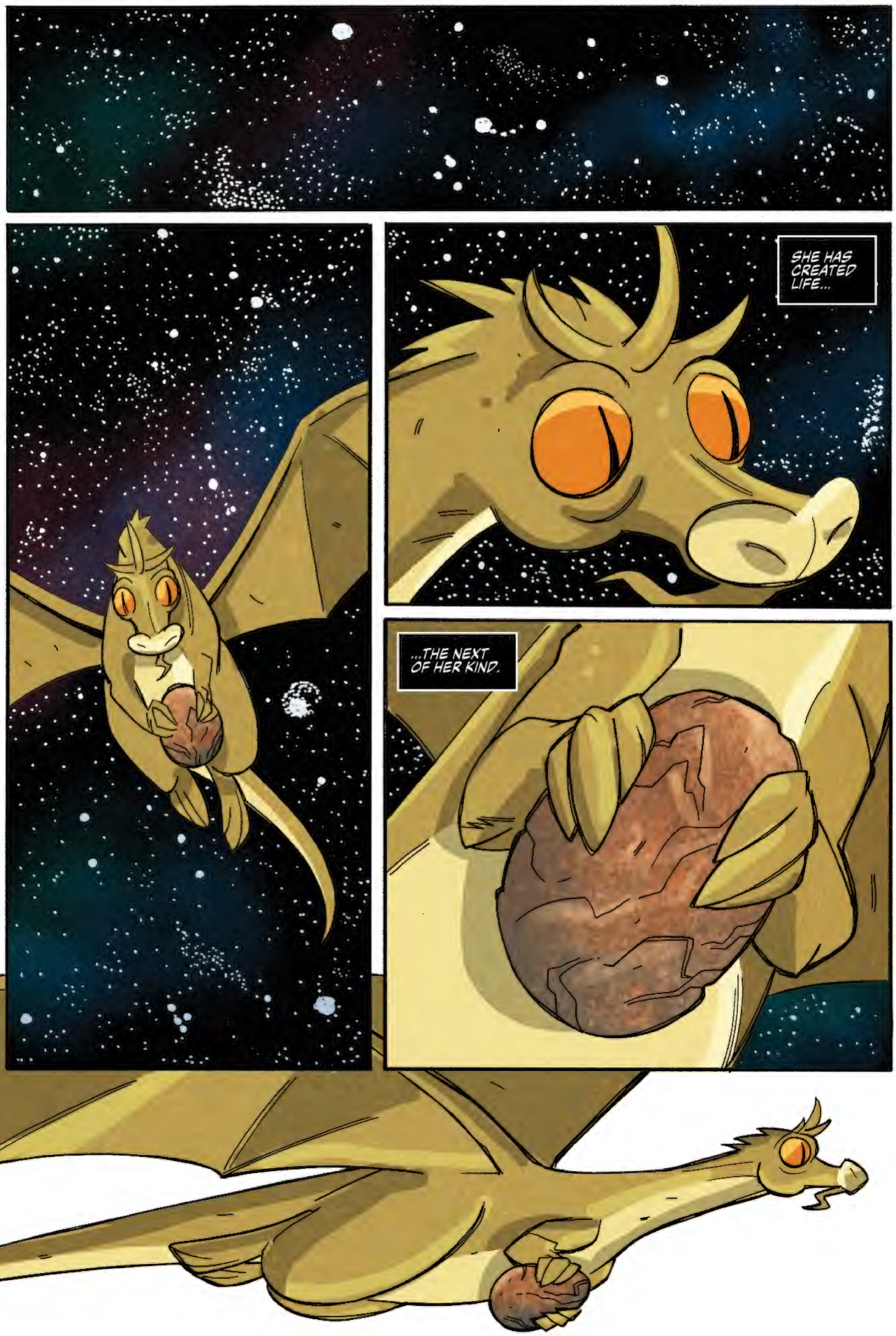
RAAAAAAAARRRGH
AAIIEE!
RROOOARRH
ARRGH!
SHUNNNK
YEEEEEEEEEARRRRGH
--THE FATE OF THE DESIGNATE WILL BE DECIDED.


WILL THE CHILD BE TRANSFORMED BY THE HUNT, OR...?
RAAAAAARRR

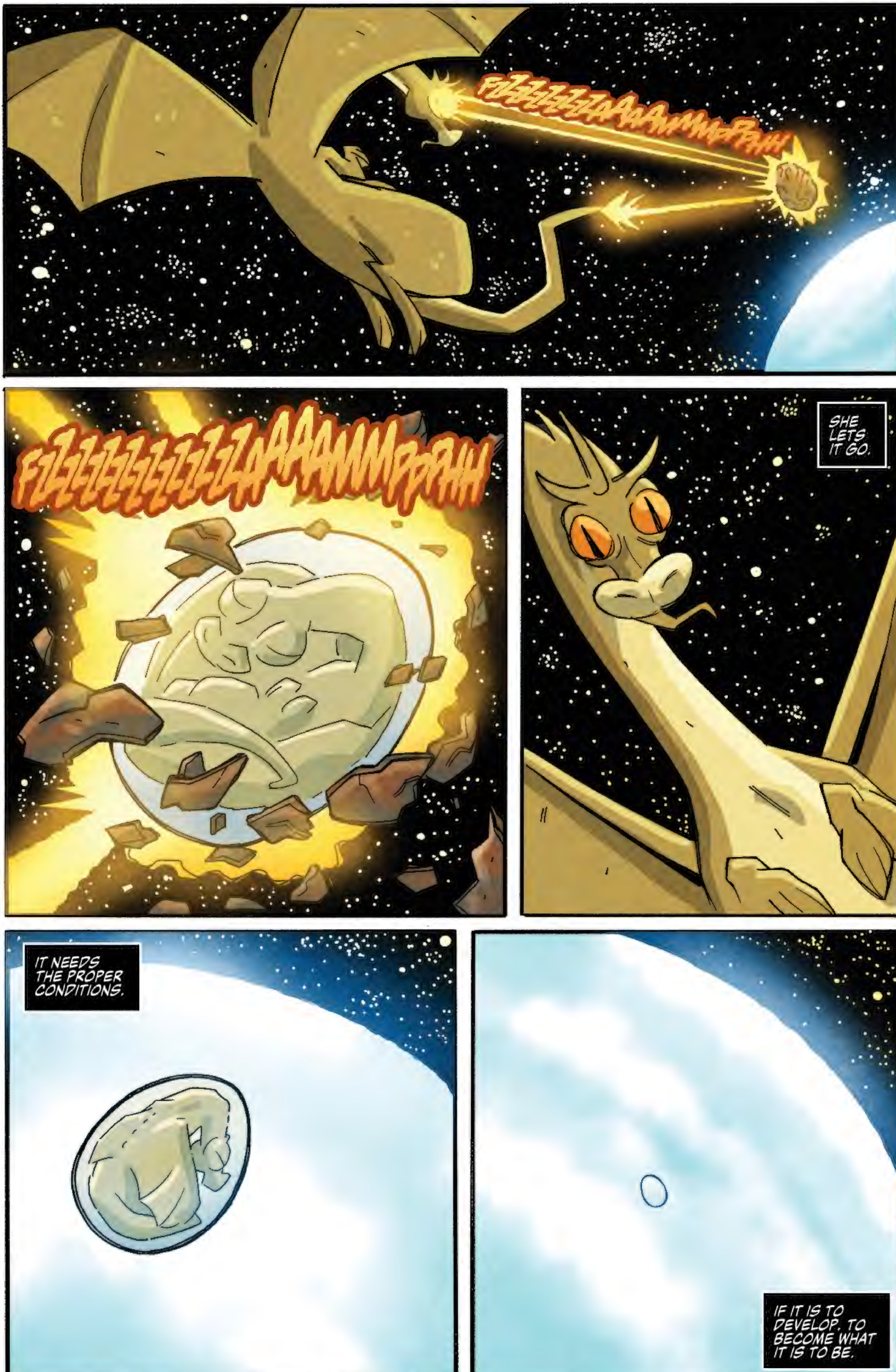

A DAY OF CHANGE.
THINGS WILL NEVER BE AS THEY WERE.

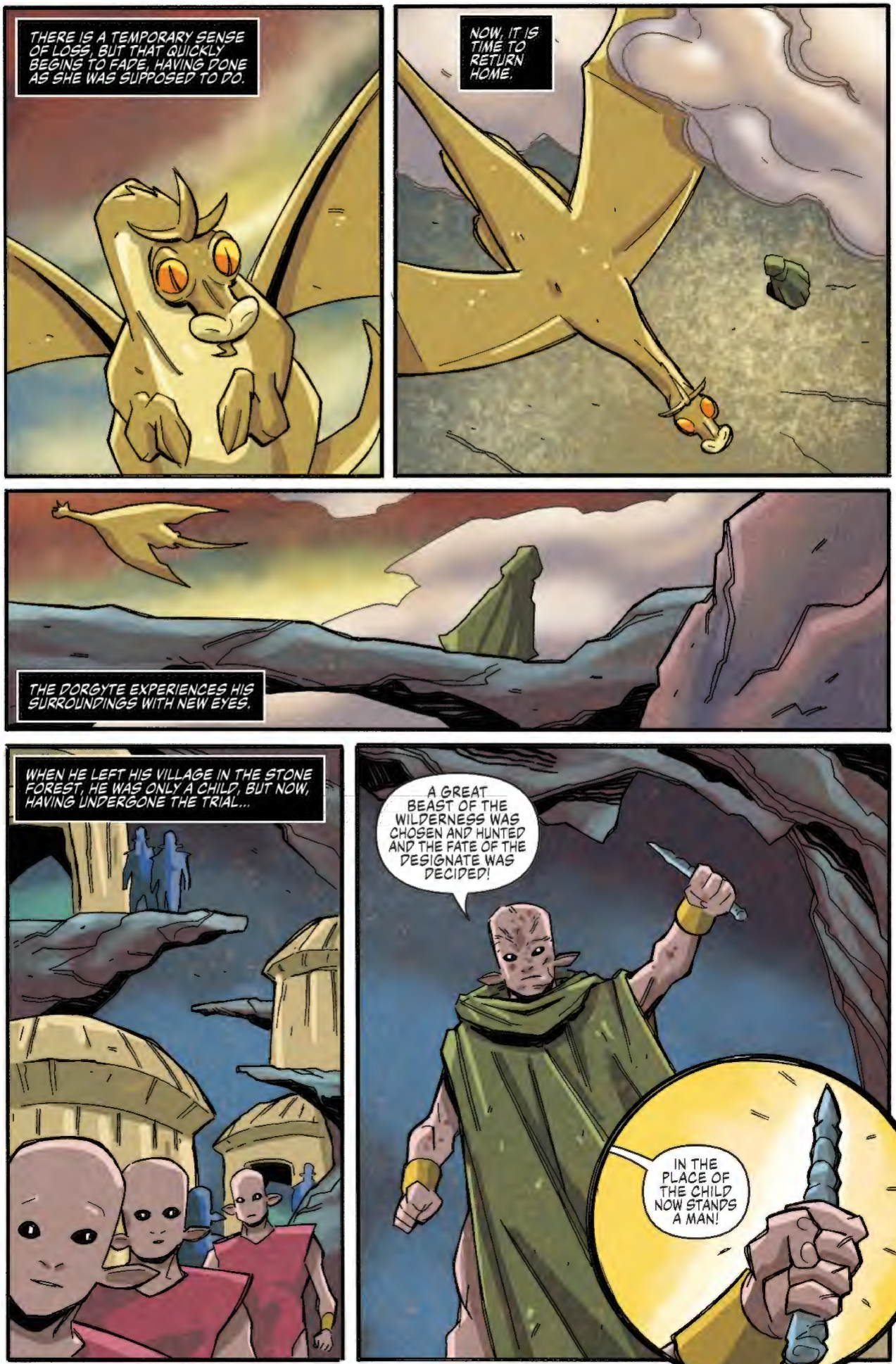
HSSssSSsSSAARRRRGGH
THE DESIGNATE WILL BE TRANSFORMED...
PLEASE?
...TRANSFORMED BY THE HUNT.
BECOMING WHAT HE WAS INTENDED TO BE.

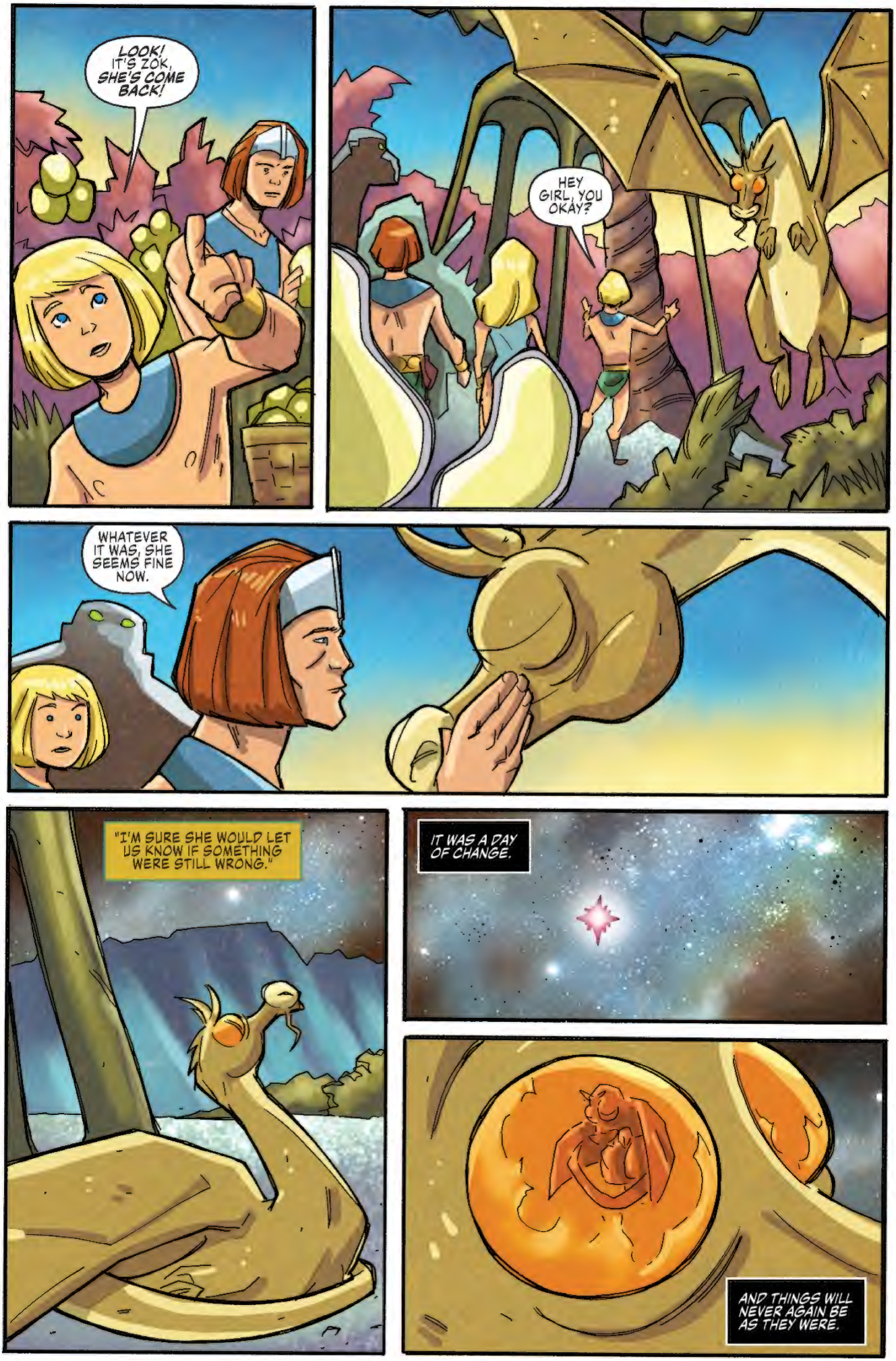
WILL THE CHILD BE TRANSFORMED FROM THE SACRIFICE OF THIS SACRED ANIMAL...
...OR WILL HE NEVER BECOME WHAT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE?
TO KNOW THIS, A BEAST MUST BE DETERMINED.
THE BEAST.


SHE HAS CREATED LIFE...
...THE NEXT OF HER KIND.

IT MUST HAVE THE PROPER PLACE TO GROW.


FZZZZZZZZAAAAMMPPAH
FZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZAAAAMMPPPAH
SHE LETS IT GO.
IT NEEDS THE PROPER CONDITIONS.
IF IT IS TO DEVELOP, TO BECOME WHAT IT IS TO BE.


THERE IS A TEMPORARY SENSE OF LOSS, BUT THAT QUICKLY BEGINS TO FADE, HAVING DONE AS SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO DO.
NOW, IT IS TIME TO RETURN HOME.
THE DORGYTE EXPERIENCES HIS SURROUNDINGS WITH NEW EYES.
WHEN HE LEFT HIS VILLAGE IN THE STONE FOREST, HE WAS ONLY A CHILD, BUT NOW, HAVING UNDERGONE THE TRIAL...
A GREAT BEAST OF THE WILDERNESS WAS CHOSEN AND HUNTED AND THE FATE OF THE DESIGNATE WAS DECIDED!
IN THE PLACE OF THE CHILD NOW STANDS A MAN!


LOOK! IT'S ZOK, SHE'S COME BACK!
HEY GIRL, YOU OKAY?
WHATEVER IT WAS, SHE SEEMS FINE NOW.
"I'M SURE SHE WOULD LET US KNOW IF SOMETHING WERE STILL WRONG."
IT WAS A DAY OF CHANGE.
AND THINGS WILL NEVER AGAIN BE AS THEY WERE.

NEXT ISSUE:

JOURNEY FROM THE CENTER OF THE WORLD!
In this issue: The mysterious entity deep beneath the surface of Planet Amzot is slowly awakening, performing inscrutable actions using unknown technology, and possibly even generating new forms of life! But when it first encounters the Herculoids, will it reveal itself to be a friend - or foe?
Expert narrative excavators TOM SNIEGOSKI and artist CRAIG ROUSSEAU uncover a rich vein in The Herculoids #5 - studded with glittering gems from FRANCESCO MATTINA, JOSEPH MICHAEL LINSNER, BJORN BARENDS, and KYLE HOTZ!

VAMPIRELLA'S MOST PROLIFIC AUTHOR TEASES HER NEXT EPIC ADVENTURE!

Tom, as always, fans are going to be excited to see you writing more *Vampirella*. You've already gone well past 100 issues writing the character, and by our count you're currently the most prolific creator in the character's history. At this point, how naturally does her voice and world come to you?

It's like slipping into a nice warm sweater. HA! Out of all the characters I've written, I seem to find her the most comfortable to write. It probably has to do with how long I've been writing her — over 25 years, off and on. I just *get* her — her, and the world in which she lives. It's always a blast sitting down to come up with her next adventures.

This new series continues on the path you laid out in *Vampirella Strikes!* — and to be clear, I'm talking about the series that launched in 2022, not the ones with the same name that you did in 2013 and 1995 [laughs]. Fans who want to dip into an awesome post-apocalypse-tinged vision of the Daughter of Drakulon are fine to jump right in, but for the benefit of that crowd (and avoiding major spoilers), how would you catch people up?

This series picks up pretty much where the 2022 *Vampirella Strikes!* ends. We have Vampirella setting herself up as a kind of private investigator in a section of Sepulcher City called the Menagerie. The Menagerie is where many of the supernatural creatures that exist in the world have come to work and settle down. At the beginning of *Vampirella: Armageddon*, we have Vampi and her partner, the werewolf named Dagwood, working a case of missing immigrants to the city. What's happening to busloads of people relocating to the great walled city? Well, Vampirella is about to find out — and it has an awful lot to do with something she's responsible for doing during the run on *Vampirella Strikes!*, as well as a war currently being waged in Hell.

As we're gearing up for this series on our end, there are a lot of hints about a new threat not of this mortal plane. Can you tease readers a bit about how this new foe or opposition is coming up, and what challenges it will pose for Vampi?

We don't have just one foe, we got a whole *bunch 'a* foes! And people who followed my Vampi stuff back in the '90s will get a kick out of some of the characters who are being reintroduced. What's interesting about this series, so far, is that I keep topping myself — just when I think I've got it all figured out, BOOM! There's another situation that develops and whole lotta new problems for Vampirella spring up! Yeah, there's nothing like cool villains, and in this series, there are more than enough. Vampirella's got her work cut out for her.

The incredible Kewber Baal is joining the party to draw this new title. He joins the deep roster of artists with whom you've worked on the franchise, like Louis Small Jr., Ed McGuinness, Amanda Conner, Johnny Desjardins, Igor Lima, Daniel Maine, Jonathan Lau, and so many other greats. How excited are you to see Kewber bring your scripts to the page?

What's been awesome about my years of writing *Vampirella* is the incredible bevy of artists that I've worked with who have helped bring my words to life. What I've tried to do with each of these series is write stories that play to the strengths of the artist that will be drawing the book. For example, when I was approached to write *Vampirella: Armageddon*, I immediately began thinking of the artist that I wanted to work with, and how their style would shape the visuals of my story. I'd worked with Kewber on my *Vengeance of Vampirella* run and absolutely adored his stuff. He was the first person that I thought of when I started to plot where this series would go. His strong visual style helped me to come up with some pretty crazy concepts. The art on this book is going to blow your socks off!

One fun angle for the first issue of this series is that one of the covers features art by superstar Mark Spears showcasing characters from his hit *Mark Spears Monsters* series — and in turn, a cover for issue #6 of his title will feature Vampirella. You've been involved in a couple of memorable crossovers with Vampi before; for the fun of it, are there any dream characters that you would like for her to interact with?

Oh, man, there are tons of characters that I think she'd be perfect to interact with, she's incredibly versatile. The one character that immediately comes to mind is Hellboy. I bet that would be ridiculously fun to write. Batman would be really cool too!

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RATED TEEN

THE HERCULOIDS

SNIEGOSKI

ROUSSEAU

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ROUSSEAU

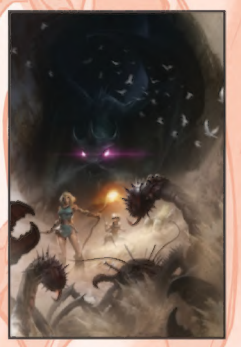
COVER GALLERY

COVER A
Art by
FRANCESCO MATTINA

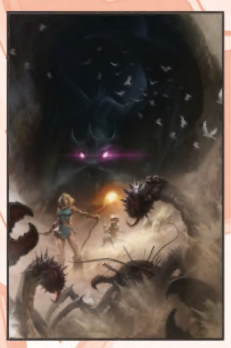
COVER B
Art by
JOSEPH MICHAEL
LINSNER

COVER C
Art by
BJORN BARENDS

COVER D
Art by
KYLE HOLTZ



COVER E
Premium Metal Cover
Virgin Art by
FRANCESCO MATTINA



COVER F
Limited Edition Cover
Virgin Art by
FRANCESCO MATTINA

COVER G
10 Copy Incentive
Line Art by
JOSEPH MICHAEL
LINSNER

COVER H
10 Copy Incentive
Virgin Art by
KYLE HOLTZ

COVER I
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